

SENATE RESOLUTION 71
By Kilby

A RESOLUTION to commend Alma Jones for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as County Mayor of Morgan County.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Alma Jones, former County Mayor of Morgan County, is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, born in Coalfield, Tennessee in 1938, Alma Jones is the youngest of the 11 children of Robert C. and Maggie McGlothin Walls. A 1956 graduate of Coalfield High School, where she was a star basketball player, Alma attended business college after high school and continued to play basketball; and

WHEREAS, marrying her childhood sweetheart Jerry Jones soon after graduation, Alma became a bookkeeper for Balliff's Department Store. She would successfully open her own store, Hansom House, after Balliff's closed; and

WHEREAS, after losing her husband Jerry to a heart attack after 32 years of marriage, Alma Jones was asked to step up and fill his position as a Morgan County Commissioner for the 6th District. Her practicality, sense of duty and keen insight allowed her to quickly become a valuable member of the commission; and

WHEREAS, as a county commissioner over the years, Alma Jones worked closely with three County Executives, served on the Budget committee for a number of years, including as its Chair, and was a member of the County Buildings Committee. She worked closely with the Sheriff, the Department of Justice and Senator Tommy Kilby to secure a new jail for Morgan County which is now in operation; and

WHEREAS, Alma Jones was one of the group of three women who became the first female employees at Brushy Mountain Prison. She worked various jobs there and attended classes at Tennessee Tech to earn the credentials to teach a class at the prison; and

WHEREAS, during her 25 year career at Brushy Mountain, she was known to the inmates as “Ms. Alma” and as “Mom” to many. Kind, but stern, she earned the respect accorded to her by the prisoners and her co-workers; and

WHEREAS, after 13 years on the County Commission, Alma planned on retiring in 2001, but was appointed to the post of County Executive to fill the term of newly elected Senator Tommy Kilby, becoming the first female County Mayor in Morgan County history; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as County Mayor, Alma Jones worked tirelessly for the citizens of Morgan County. She oversaw the renovation of the courthouse for the 100th anniversary, saving money by utilizing inmates to repair the roof; organized the highly successful 100th anniversary celebration; went door to door to secure water easements for waterlines; was instrumental in securing water grants and infrastructure grants; and successfully lobbied in Nashville with Sen. Kilby to locate the new state prison in Morgan County; and

WHEREAS, Alma Jones was responsible for saving Morgan County’s world famous “Smallest Library in the World” when it was being destroyed by termites. She saw to it that the facility was restored and relocated to preserve an important part of Morgan County’s history; and

WHEREAS, a patriotic American who understands the real cost of liberty and freedom, having lost a beloved brother in service to his country, Alma Jones organized a day of remembrance to honor all veterans of Morgan County and to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the terrible tornado that struck Morgan County on November 11, 2002; and

WHEREAS, in front of a crowd at the Memorial Service estimated to be close to 600 in number, two separate unveilings revealed a plaque bearing the name of those killed by the tornado the year before and a monument that contained the name of every Morgan County soldier killed in combat; and

WHEREAS, throughout her exemplary tenure as County Mayor of Morgan County, Mrs. Jones distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her community; and

WHEREAS, choosing to not seek a second term, Alma Jones worked tirelessly to get another woman elected, her former assistant Becky Ruppe, who is now the second female County Mayor from Morgan County; and

WHEREAS, Alma Jones's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Jones is a an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and she epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, devoted to her, family Alma Jones shared 32 joyous years with her late husband, Jerry, before his passing and has recently suffered the tragic loss of her only son, Jerry Lee, but remains the proud mother of daughter Renee and devoted grandmother to treasured grandchildren Britt, Kathryn and James, step grandson Greg Carroll and his wife Taynia, and great granddaughter Kayla; and

WHEREAS, Alma Jones is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby commend Alma Jones for her honorable and astute service to the good people of Morgan County as their County Mayor and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.